The

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Notes of the Month.

The members of our community, and indeed of a very much wider community, will learn with the greatest satisfaction that Dr. John Campbell has been appointed Chief Surgeon to the Anglo-American Hospital at Wimereux, near Boulogne, one of the base hospitals of the British Expeditionary Force. This particular hospital, with which the name and the devoted work of Lady Hadfield are closely identified, is situated in an area of great surgical activity, where the need for experienced operating surgeons is very pressing during the present heavy fighting. Magnificent results have already been achieved therein, and we are confident that under the direction of its present highly-skilled Chief Surgeon its work in the future will be a worthy continuation of its great work in the past. Like all men who go to the Front, Dr. Campbell has little to say with regard to his experience and observation, but in the matter of the efficiency of his hospital it is clear he is greatly impressed. Anyone who has not been there, he says, could not possibly form any idea of the marvellous organisation they have in that hospital; the colossal numbers of men, the perfection of the arrangements for their comfort and for the medical and surgical care of them, and the regularity with which everything is done surpass anything one ever sees in civil life. Dr. Campbell has been for many years associated with the Belfast Medical School; he was Senior Surgeon to the Samaritan Hospital, Chairman of Convocation of Queen's University, and second in command of the Queen's University Veterans' Corps. He is now on active service, and we know that it will be as well as it can be for the wounded men who come into his skilled and kindly hands.

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The third year of the war has opened under conditions far more favourable for the Allies than was the case a year ago. In consequence, there is a general feeling of hopefulness and optimism both at home and abroad. This, of course, does not imply that we need expect a speedy conclusion to hostilities. Much remains for us to do before circumstances will exist conducive to a righteous and stable peace. But one result of the turn of the tide is the increasing attention given to problems likely to arise after peace is declared. The spirit in which these are now being considered is nowhere more strikingly evinced than in religious circles. It would seem as if the war were likely to accomplish more for religious freedom and progress than many years of

"peaceful penetration." We find, for example, one of the chief speakers at the Wesleyan Conference giving expression to sentiments like these: "In their theological thought they were passing through a process of sifting. If theology meant clear thinking well expressed about the greatest issues of human life and destiny and men's relation to God, they wanted more of it, not less. But theology must be progressive. A great deal of what had been called religion was passing away, and what was wanted was a religion which was real and adequate to the present stress and strain." Those are sentiments we have long tried to express and to commend to the notice of others. It is obvious that they will gain in impressiveness and urgency in the coming days. May we in our own Church work endeavour to live up to their meaning and to give them ever-increasing application.

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By this time the secretaries and ministers of the congregation in our Non-Subscribing Church will have received a copy of the circular sent out on behalf of the General Synod's Sub-Committee. We hope that it will be carefully considered and brought to the notice of our Church members. The reproduction in our present issue of the paper on "Our Mission and our Message," read by the Moderator at the General Synod meeting in June, will give special point to the appeal embodied in the circular. By the month of October, when the winter work of our congregations begin, all our plans for an active crusade should be in an advanced state of preparation.

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Recently, in reviving our knowledge of one of George Meredith's striking novels, "Beauchamp's Career," we came across this statement of faith, which the author places in the mouth of a leading character: "Ours . . .is the belief that humanity advances beyond the limits of creed, is to be tied to none. We reverence the Master in his teachings; we behold the limits of him in his creed—and that is not his work. We truly are his disciples, who see how far it was in him to do service; not they that made of his creed a strait-jacket for humanity. So, in our prayers we dedicate the world to God, not calling him great for a title, no—showing him we know him great in a limitless world, lord of a truth we tend to, have not grasped." The same character is made responsible for very suggestive remarks on the subject of prayer, and they are especially pertinent for the present time when the subject of prayer and its helpfulness is in so many minds: "I say Prayer is good. I counsel it to you again and again: in joy, in sickness of heart. The infidel will not pray; the creed-slave prays to the image in his box. . . . We make prayer a part of us, praying for no gifts, no interventions; through the faith in prayer opening the soul to the undiscerned. And take this . . . for the good in prayer, that it makes us repose on the unknown with confidence, makes us flexible to change, ready for revolution—for life, then! He who has the fountain of prayer in him will not complain of hazards. Prayer is the recognition of laws; the soul's exercise and source of strength! its thread of conjunction with them . . . We that fight the living world must have the universal for succour of the truth in it. Cast forth the soul in prayer, you meet the effluence of the outer truth, you join with the creative elements giving breath to you; and that crust of habit which is the soul's tomb; and custom, the soul's tyrant; and pride, our volcano-peak which sinks us in a crater; and fear, which plucks the feathers from the wings of the soul and sits it naked and shivering in a vault, where the passing of a common hodman's foot above sounds like the king of terrors coming—you are free of them, you live in the day and for the future, by this exercise and discipline of the soul's faith."

OUR MISSION AND OUR MESSAGE.

By Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.

It would appear, from many and varied indications, that we stand at a critical

stage of religious development. The disturbing influences of the world-war have affected every aspect of our common life, and deeply stirred, for good or for ill, the main currents of national thought and feeling. New problems are emerging, fresh opportunities of service are everywhere presenting themselves. Profoundly impressed by the changing conditions of our present-day life, different sections of the Christian Church are taking stock of their religious resources, and setting themselves seriously to meet, and cope with, the questions that concern man's spiritual welfare. Already the Church of England has planned a great campaign, which, in the immediate future, will have for its object the reaching and the re-animating of its great religious constituency. Susceptible to the same signs of the time, and actuated by a like desire to garner for God the great harvest-fields of earth, the Free Church Council of England has made a stirring appeal for unity and active co-operation among its members. The two movements have so far roused much enthusiasm and elicited striking and whole-hearted support. In no sense antagonistic in aim, they both represent an earnest desire to extend God's kingdom upon earth, and are animated by the conviction " that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

We, for our part, look upon these projected crusades with approval and heartfelt sympathy. The fields are white to the harvest, the labourers are few. But does that represent quite adequately our attitude? Are we content to look on and encourage others who are seeking more effectually to do work for God and man? Must the greater opportunities, whose presence we also observe, be grasped by others, while we merely look on and wish these " God speed ? " Have we no part to play in the great movement of thought and activity which is already the certain consequence of the war, and which, in the immediate future, is likely to assume still greater dimensions? What of the NOW—no less than of the THEN? When devastation and destruction have worked their will in so many lands and lives, when deeply-felt sorrow has invaded so many homes, is there no special need that we can satisfy, no fitting task that we can perform? If to these and similar questions none but a negative answer can be given then it is surely vain to speak either of a Mission or a Message for times like these. Nor are the circumstances such that we can content ourselves to " carry on business as usual," putting off till after the war the endeavour to adapt ourselves to the changing conditions of life and thought. There are some duties which once let slip can never again be overtaken, much less undertaken, and, to my thinking, the duty of meeting the present situation is emphatically and pre-eminently such. We cannot afford to wait, and we certainly ought not to wish to wait, for a greater opportunity than that we now have.

But let us grant that we have no desire to stand apart while others labour, that we—no less than other Christians—are God's fellow-workers. We have both a Mission and a Message and only seek for strength to perform the one and proclaim the other in a manner befitting their divine character and their human urgency. It behoves us to make clear what they are in order to ascertain how they can best be achieved.

We have heard in Mr. Pickering's paper something of the meaning and value of the principle of Non-Subscription. We claim, and, as I believe, rightly claim, that our Churches are pre-eminently the organs of a principle of freedom which is of primary importance to the religious life. Religion, without the fetters of creed, was the great desideratum of our spiritual ancestors, and is the priceless possession of those who have entered into the self-sacrificing labours by which it was won. Must we, then, mindful of what freedom is and implies, perceive in its propagation our paramount and imperative duty? Looking around upon other Churches, which still profess adherence to creeds, confessions, articles, shall we deem it our special duty " to proclaim release to the captives and

recovering of sight to the blind?" I do not think so, and for these reasons in particular:—First, such a mission would strike a controversial note which now is highly undesirable, and would tell against its success. Second, it would unfairly reflect on other Churches, which, while suffering under what we consider a grave disadvantage, nevertheless have done, and are doing, splendid religious and social service. So far from attacking or estranging such Churches, we should give them all the sympathy and support we can. Third, and this is even more weighty than the preceding reasons, to do so would be to misconceive the true nature of liberty. The latter is a means—not an end, a condition—not a consummation. We talk much of freedom, we belaud the names of those by whose fidelity and sacrifice it was won. These things are in themselves good, but they are not all, or the most important. How are we using the freedom we possess and prize? To what fuller and more faithful service is it prompting? We might just as well be in the position of the Christians whose lot we affect to commiserate if we do not more, or venture more, than they. I yield to none in my love of liberty, and feel with ever deeper conviction that only in an atmosphere of freedom is it possible to do one's best work. Moreover, I am prepared to urge that it is still laid upon our Churches to maintain a freedom based on fundamental principle, and to hold fast their allegiance to reason and conscience as the supreme arbiters of religious truth and moral duty. That, however, is more suggestive of our primary duty than our final end; it betokens our starting-point, and not our goal. Thanks to those whose memories and labours we must ever revere and respect, we begin in liberty. What, then, is the course marked out for us, of what character the consummation towards which we should ever more ardently and more earnestly tend?

That we have a Mission, and that a condition of freedom will contribute best to its success, is not only a conclusion of my mind, but the outcome of my personal experience. I go back in thought to a time not many years ago when, following upon a suggestion made at the Missionary Conference in Manchester, it was decided to take steps to begin a Mission to the masses outside our Churches. As a member of a small Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose, I helped to choose the van, which ultimately toured the North of England and inaugurated the so-called Van Mission. Called upon to assist in the novel enterprise, I took charge of the van for a week in a populous centre, and also spoke at the concluding meeting in one of the largest squares in Manchester. I then discovered that scores of people who had never entered our Churches, or knew of our particular tenets, could manifest deep interest in, and express heartfelt sympathy with, the message proclaimed. Again and again the admission was made privately, and in all obvious sincerity, that the words uttered were those for which heart and mind had long been waiting. The conviction then gained that we had a Mission for thoughtful modern men and women was confirmed by later experience, and is still firmly held. But let us be careful to differentiate between Mission and Method. I am urging the duty of the former, without for a moment claiming that it can only be worked by the same methods which proved effective elsewhere. Every mission must devise its own methods, and take note of its own special circumstances. Provided it be only great and urgent, and potent in its appeal, it will not fail to suggest fitting methods for its successful prosecution. That it is great and imperatively needed the present war sufficiently shows. Who has not perceived how, under the stress of recent trying events, so-called orthodox theology has assumed a more humane guise, and become susceptible to more gentle and gracious views of the divine purpose. When in the presence of sudden sorrow and bitter bereavement, how halting and hesitant has shown itself the once confidently-held condemnation of the unredeemed. The unexhausted and inexhaustible resources of the divine

pity and love, for which we pleaded in opposition to the inexorable demands of an offended Deity, have now come nearer to popular acceptance ur der the exigencies of private need and public sentiment. In this approximation to our own theological point of view I see grounds for hope and encouragement. Granted that we can make plain and appealing our message, who will venture to doubt its widespread acceptance?

Is it, then, a new message? Have changing conditions made impera tive for us changed conceptions of God, of man, of human duty? It is my own belief that the conceptions, long cherished by us, still ring true to human need. Consider, first of all, that which must vitally determine the character of any religion, its central conception of God. Who have pleaded more passionately or more eloquently for the truth of the Divine Fatherhood than the ministers and teachers of our free Churches, both at home and abroad? There may be slight differences of statement and of emphasis, as befitted men who looked at a supremely great subject from their own special angle of vision and peculiarities of experience. Yet concerning the main conception of God, and God's attitude to man, Channing, Theodore Parker, John Hamilton Thom, James Martineau, Richard Armstrong, speak as one. What modification need we to make in this view held by the latter and put forth for popular acceptance some twenty years ago. ? "With me, then, in my religion, the belief in God the Father of Love covers and embraces all the rest. What I have of religion besides that flows out of it as the stream from its source. . . And my supreme belief, my own central and all-encompassing conviction, is that the universe and all that therein is are under the control and government of a Being for whom Love, Goodness, Holiness, and the word 'God' itself are our poor, lame ways of trying to express that which He is and ever has been.

"I find His action all through the marvellous universe of which physical science tells me, sustaining the suns and stars upon their courses, yet attending to each minutest fibre of every flower and grass,—a Living Love, to whom nought is vast and nought is tiny—the Spirit that sustains all motion, from the sweep of the comet through unimagined vistas of space to the trembling of gossamer in the summer breeze,—the Eternal Thinker, who through all the æons has been working out His purposes, 'weaving the ages as a work upon the loom.' And I believe, I say, that the ideas 'Love,' 'Goodness,' 'Holiness,' go nearest of any we can frame to the true account of the essential nature of this God."

If there be any new note in this utterance of Richard Armstrong, as compared say with that we catch in the statements of Channing or of Theodore Parker, it is merely that it finds new inspiration and meaning in that knowledge of nature yielded by modern science. It is the old message, filled with a newer and deeper meaning. But that in itself is significant. For the real truth and value of any great conception is two-fold,—first, its ability to stand the test of time, second, to find in time a richer and an ampler meaning. Subject to this double trial of worth, our conception of God has gained with the passing of the years. Precisely at the period when Richard Armstrong was making his appeal to the people of Liverpool, we find one of our American divines (J. W. Chadwick) making this outspoken assertion to his Brooklyn congregation: "Let us be confident that at no time before, in all its varied history, has our Unitarian doctrine of one God, the Father, taken up into itself such a wealth of meaning as it does in these last days." Is that also the ground of our confidence so that with a like assurance we can make the same assertion? I, at least, do not hesitate to say that in these terrible, trying times there is no thought so appealing and persistent to myself, so readily and appropriately offered for the acceptance of others, as the thought of a God infinitely loving and pitiful. Without the inexpressible consolation and comfort of such a conception my preaching would indeed be vain. And

it seems to me that it must become more, not less, the weighty burden of our message.

This conception involves its great correlative: the Brotherhood of Man. It is not only implicit in the thought of the Divine Fatherhood,—it is, according to Jesus, so knit up with its expression and application that we cannot view them apart. Even so have they been ever regarded in the thought of our own teachers. To quote again Richard Armstrong: "And being thus convinced of God, and that God is Love, I infer from that the Brotherhood of Man. For I know that all men have sprung from God, and that as His love embraces all of them, so are they bound together in fellowship as children of one family. And so I see that every thought and word and deed which makes against or breaks this brotherhood is sin; and that the only right life for the children of God is life on the lines of true and active brotherly love and service."

Now, in claiming these great truths as the main constituents of our message, it may be objected that we do not stand apart from the rest of Christianity. Are not these doctrines common alike to all sections of the Christian Church? Wherein, then, are they OUR message? To that I would reply: Our distinctive position is that we are so jealous for their paramount importance that we will allow nothing to obscure their beauty and overshadow their supremacy. It is in this latter respect that we see the inferiority of the orthodox position. The chief reason why even now there is difficulty in orthodoxy allowing those two conceptions to work their will is that other things have been added thereto, which impair their power and hinder their application. When, for example, orthodox preachers have recently asked: "What will be the condition hereafter of those who die on the battlefield?" We see how old theories of salvation, sin, and punishment hinder the full operation of the thought of the Divine Love and Pity. How far below even the thought of the great ones of old time are some modern exponents of Christianity, tested by such a thought as this in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus:—

They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts,
And will humble their souls in his sight, saying,
We will fall into the hands of the Lord,
And not into the hands of men;
For as his majesty is, so also is his mercy.

Ecclesiasticus ii. 17, 18.

Out of the great truths of the Divine Fatherhood and Human Brotherhood issues a two-fold obligation,—Love to God and Love to Man. Neither is to be understood, much less expressed, apart from the other. Jesus regarded them not as two separate commandments, but as conjoint aspects of the religious life. His greatest service was to show perfectly how they could exist side by side in the one personality. All the majesty and the meaning of that two-fold obligation, never yet exhausted in human thought or feeling, found in him their most perfect exemplification. To him we turn for inspiration and encouragement in the storm and stress of human life, since the acutest sufferings could not disturb his love for God nor the opposition that culminated in death lessen his love for man. It was his supreme service to religious humanity to show that such love, fitly and fully rendered, was more than adequate to meet all the issues of life and death. Hence, we can never conceive any decline of his sway over the hearts of men, and if the Kingdom he proclaimed be yet evinced in their lives it will be by the diffusion of that love which was supreme in him.

Such then is the main substance of our message. All else is subsidiary thereto. In what spirit shall we seek to proclaim and express that message in thought and activity? Let the answer be given in the words of a great religious teacher of the last century, John Ruskin. Some fifty years ago he lectured in the Royal College of Science, Dublin, on the theme: "The Mystery of Life and its Arts." The religious tenour of his teaching, as therein expressed, rings just as true to-day as it did then: "The greatest of all the mysteries of life, and the most terrible, is the corruption of even the sincerest

religion, which is not daily founded on rational, effective, humble, and helpful action. Helpful action, observe! for there is just one law, which, obeyed, keeps all religion pure—forgotten, makes them all false. Whenever in any religious faith, dark or bright, we allow our minds to dwell upon the points in which we differ from other people, we are wrong, and in the devil's power. That is the essence of the Pharisee's thanksgiving—'Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are.' At every moment of our lives we should be trying to find out, not in what we differ from other people, but in what we agree with them; and the moment we find we can agree as to anything that should be done, kind or good (and who but fools couldn't?), then do it; push at it together: you can't quarrel in a side-by-side push; but the moment that even the best men stop pushing, and begin talking, they mistake their pugnacity for pity, and it's all over. I will not speak of the crimes which in past times have been committed in the name of Christ, not of the follies which are at this hour held to be consistent with obedience to Him; but I WILL speak of the morbid corruptions and waste of vital power in religious sentiment, by which the pure strength of that which should be the guiding soul of every nation, the splendour of its youthful manhood, and spotless light of its maidenhood, is frittered or cast away." ("Sesame and Lilies," pp. 201–202.)

Assuredly we to-day would avoid such corruption of our religion. We can only do so if we resolutely suppress every trace of that easy self-satisfaction out of which the sense of spiritual superiority so often springs. We need a mission for ourselves, no less than for those outside our Churches. The latter will never be living organs of the divine spirit until they possess fewer languid and laggard members. More and more must they be pervaded by devotion to God and kindle a fervent passion for humanity. We, too, must rise to a nobler conception of our aims, and be each and all thrilled by the spirit of this high resolve:—

"My life shall be a challenge, not a truce!
This is my homage to the mightier powers,
To ask my boldest question, undismayed.
It matters not how strait the gate,
And charged with punishment the goal,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul."

CREEDS AND DEEDS.

By Rev. John Barron.

'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—Matthew vii. 21.

Christ did not receive opposition only, He also received a good deal of favour. The common people heard him gladly. There were those, like Nicodemus, who were ready to accept Him as a teacher sent from God. There were numbers prepared to call Him Lord.

But that was not enough for Christ. Indeed, He cared comparatively little as to what men thought of Him, for when the disciples had acknowledged Him, by their own feeling, their own intuition, to be the Christ, He strictly charged them to tell no man.

Simply to accept Him as Christ, because His disciples said that He was Christ, was to make a profession with the lips without the consent of the heart.

Yet is not that precisely what has been done? The successors of the Apostles, the teachers, the doctors of the Church, the bishops, the councils, who have made the creeds, have said, "You must believe what we tell you concerning Christ, or you are not a Christian. We, the bishops and priests of the Church, say, 'You must believe that He was not only the Christ, but that He was Almighty God; if you do not believe in the Deity of Christ, you are not a Christian.'"

And, in these days, the same thing is repeated. If you do not believe in the Deity of Christ, that He was God, you cannot join the Young Men's Christian Association. If you happen to be a Non-Conformist minister in England, and refuse to say that you

believe Jesus was God Almighty, you may not join the Free Church Council. Bishops will invite a gathering of Nonconformist ministers to their palaces; but they will leave you out; the writer knows this from experience.

But I look in vain to the teaching of Christ for any authority for all this. Nowhere do I read of Him as proclaiming Himself God Almighty. He did not stand in the market-places or in the Temple courts and say, "Behold in Me the Creator of the world, the God whom you worship and adore." The Jews never had any idea that their coming Messiah would be God Himself; the Angel of the Lord perhaps, but nothing more. The Christ, the Anointed of God, that was as far as Jesus permitted His disciples to go, and even then they were not permitted to spread it. His own teaching and His own life must be the witness; but, more important than Himself was His message, more important was it to do the things that He said, than to call Him Lord.

But has the Church taught that? Has the Church said, "You must be merciful before you can be a Christian, you must be charitable in your thoughts of others, showing kindness, instead of doing injury?" Has the Church taught that you must be pure in heart before becoming a Christian? Has the Church taught that you must be a peace-maker, instead of stirring up strife and hatred, before you can be a Christian? Has the Church taught that you must be true and love truth for its own sake, if you would be a Christian? Nay, on the other hand, it has persecuted with the most malignant hatred and bitterness those who ventured to search for truth for themselves and thought in a way different from what the Church taught. But these things Christ commanded. This was what He meant by "doing the will of the Father."

You could teach a parrot to say the creed, and many people say the creed like parrots. Bishop Bickersteth, of Exeter, confirmed some idiots in the asylum, and was criticised for so doing. In his reply, he quoted the lines:—

> What does silly Billy see?
> Three in one and one in three,
> And one of them has died for me.

And I am afraid that is the value of the beliefs of the vast majority of Church-goers. Bow the knee to Baal, belie your conscience, do the conventional thing which the society people do, which it is the fashion to do.

Yet the Kingdom of Heaven will remain closed to you if your religion is of nothing more worth than that. But does that mean that after death you will have to go to a place of torment? Nothing of the sort. The Kingdom of Heaven pertains to this life, as well as the next. The Kingdom of Heaven is joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. If to be a Christian be to believe in the Deity of Christ, then His own immediate followers were not Christians. In our imagination, let us draw near to a crowd assembled to hear Jesus; it may be on the hill-side, it may be beside the sea-shore. The audience listens intently; He may be speaking on the Beatitudes, on Mercy, Purity of Heart, Peace-making, Truth. He may be telling the parable of the sower going forth to sow, or the parable of the prodigal son.

Is He talking about Himself? Is He asking people to believe anything concerning Himself? Is He not appealing to them to live "the life," to cherish the words of truth in their hearts, to turn to God their Father and leave their sins with the swine in the far-off land?

And, as an instance of the difference between lip-profession and obedience, He tells of two sons, who were told by their father to go and work in the vineyard. One said, "I go, sir," and went not; the other refused, but afterwards repented and went; which of these twain did the will of his father—the one so ready to make a profession of obedience and then not to carry it out, or the other who did not make the profession, but who carried out his instructions?

While the Christian Church has laid such stress on belief about Christ, belief in His Godhead, belief in the vicarious atonement, belief in the theology of

man's fall and redemption and the scheme of salvation, and has called these the Gospel, very little has been said about the real simple Gospel of love to God and love to man. The Church has laid far more stress on saying Lord, Lord, than on doing the will of the Father.

A man may say Lord, Lord, with just the same meaning to the words as the Church wishes him to place on them, and be a good Christian. A man may not agree with a word of the Church's theology, and yet still be a good Christian. It is the story of the Good Samaritan over again. The priest and the Levite passed by. It was the outcast who showed what true religion was. It is not what a man believes, what he professes, that matters; it is what the man is.

Good honest men, who try to model their lives on the lines of strict honesty say how difficult nowadays it is to make a living at all. Tradesmen may sit together in their Church on a Sunday, and next morning be undercutting each other in an attempt to get a monopoly and force the other man out of business. And so it goes on, and the more one gets to know of the world the more heart-breaking it becomes. What is wanted? The Gospel of Christ. But what is that Gospel? Brotherliness, the strong helping the weak, the feeling that humanity is one great whole, that the suffering of one is the suffering of all, and that no real gain can be made which involves injury to another.

The Gospel of Christ is a practical thing for to-day. Whether He was God, whether He was the Son of Man, does not affect the practical value of His teaching. Surely, if anyone believes Him to be God, then all the more importance ought to be given to His practical teaching, all the more thought given to the things that we do.

A great Russian, Count Tolstoy, took to studying the Gospel of Christ for himself. He studied it as though it were a book he was taking up for the first time, and it is perfectly true that in a sense it was the first time. As he read of the things which Jesus wanted people to do, he was more and more appalled at the way in which the things Christ had laid greatest stress upon had been utterly neglected, and he took the precepts and thought in what way were they to be applied to life, and what would be the result; and the teaching, on its own merit, seemed so reasonable that he became a Christian himself in a very real sense. Although one of the nobility, he set himself to live like any of his poorer neighbours. He made friends with the poor and working classes, toiled in the fields, mended his own shoes, and gathered round him devoted followers.

I am not advocating Tolstoy's mode of life, though I admire the spirit of it. But what a good thing it would be for us all if we could put out of our minds all that we have been taught about Christ and the Bible, and could come to the teachings with fresh and unprejudiced minds.

Many years ago Rajah Rammohun Roy, an Indian, came to the New Testament in this way, and, studying the book without the aid of missionaries or anyone else, he wrote a book, "The Precepts of Jesus the Guide to Peace." He came to England with high ideals as to what Christianity was and what a Christian civilisation would be, and when he saw the actual state of affairs, he died of a broken heart.

If, putting aside all doctrines about the nature of Christ, leaving that on one side altogether, the world would apply itself to His message, and using the same judgment, the same discretion with reference to it, that it uses with reference to the teachings of any social reformer, who can talk and write about the Labour Question, or any other problem that agitates people's minds, the teaching would have a new freshness and power for us that would drive home its appeal, and, becoming more than ever the guiding principle of life, would usher in the Kingdom of God upon earth.

From "The Herald of the Star."

"Do but your duty, and do not trouble yourself whether it is in the cold, or by a good fire."

ORDINATION AT MONEYREA.

A MORE auspicious day could not have been wished for than that on which our friends at Moneyrea secured for the ordination of the Rev. Albert Whitford, on Wednesday, August 2nd. Sweet Moneyrea, with her "preaching house and teaching-house, and minister's-house between," could scarcely have ever looked more bewitching than on that happy, sunny day, made happier and sunnier by the smiles and greetings from far and near. The double-faced clock, which has one face inside and the other outside of the Meeting-House, told of the approaching hour, and the cheering sight of vehicles of various descriptions approaching from different directions showed that here was one centre at least where a congregation knew how to rise to the opportunity by assembling in a manner worthy of an occasion. The Presbytery of Bangor held its preliminary meeting in the old school-room. The service was opened by the Rev. James Glynne Davies, of Banbridge, with praise, prayer, and lesson. An exceedingly clear and able discourse was delivered by the Rev. Kenneth Dunbar, M.A., of Comber, from 1 John v. 4—"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Very graphically the preacher described the nature of the struggles with the world, which in days gone by religion had to undertake, and culminated his theme by its application to present-day needs and the problems of the future which were even now assuming form, emphasising the value of a faith that overcometh the world.

REV. A. WHITFORD.

The exposition of Presbyterian Church Order was given by the Rev. John Barron, of Ballyhemlin, who laid special stress on the value of the Eldership, which in the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland has not been sufficiently appreciated.

The Rev. J. J. Magill put the questions prescribed by the Code of Discipline to the Minister-elect, and called upon him to give a statement of his beliefs.

MR. A. K. STEWART, J.P.,
Member of the Moneyrea Church Committee, and Honorary Treasurer of the Orphan Society.

The Rev. A. Whitford, in responding, said that it was not his purpose to submit a statement of his theological beliefs; were it possible, he did not think the congregation would deem it necessary. While we may not agree with Emerson that "Consistency is the hob-goblin of little minds," at the same time we must be prepared to subordinate theological, as other, convictions to the growing demands of human life. If an intense desire to labour among them, to minister to their needs, to aid them in their quest for God; if a passion for things human and divine be an evidence of fitness for the work then he felt that God had called him to be their minister. It was a comparatively easy task to stand in a pulpit and preach to an eager, listening crowd, or to empty pews. That was not the sum total of a minister's work. His weekly tasks were not finished when he had pronounced the benediction at the close of the service. He had to live and move among his people, comforting and strengthening their faith. In the words of the apostle, "Pray for me that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel."

The question was then put to the congregation—that, having listened to this statement of belief, did they still adhere to the call, the answer was given in the affirmative by Mr. S. M'Kenna Turkington, Secretary of the Congregation. The members of Presbytery then took their places in the space in front of the pulpit for the act of ordination with the laying on of hands, the Moderator, the Rev. G. J. Slipper, offering up the consecration prayer. The right hand of fellowship was then extended by each Presbyter in turn, as well as by representative members of the congregation.

The Rev. Principal Dr. Sydney H. Mellone, M.A., gave the address to the minister, reminding him that in Presbyterianism that meant that he was made a preaching elder to co-operate with the elders of his congregation in the spiritual oversight of the flock. The qualifications of mind and character required for the office were touched upon, and a just estimate given of the place of "book-learning" as a necessary and desirable accomplishment.

The Rev. Mathew Watkins, of Mountpottinger, Belfast, the previous minister of Moneyrea, referred to the opportunity of delivering the charge to the congregation as a living and impressive one. He asked for the re-consideration of the life their Church stood for, both in relation to themselves and their minister. The object of Church-life was to deepen the religious sentiment, to strengthen the spirit of love towards God and man, and fashion human life after the example of Jesus Christ our Master. Nothing brought home the sense of unity of solidarity like attendance at public worship; but it had to be in the right spirit. "There is no inspiration to your minister in long arrays of empty pews." They had to remember that the future lay with the children, and to think of the force of example in Church attendance and help them to appreciate the Sunday School.

The service was brought to a close by the newly-ordained minister, and all present adjourned to the school-room, where a substantial repast which literally had been prepared for by prayer and fasting, was done justice to.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING BELIEF AND CONDUCT.

IV.—Crime and Sin.

Q. 37.—Is all wrong-doing of one kind?

A. 37.—No. Some wrong-doing comes under the head of crime, other wrong-doing under the head of sin. Crime is the conduct condemned either by the common consent of a community, that is to say by its representative governors, or else by its despotic rulers. Crime is an offence in the view of a community or of its rulers; sin is an offence in the view of God himself.

Q. 38.—Is not all sin accounted crime?

A. 38.—No. All sin is not accounted crime. On the one hand, there is much wrong-doing which every community or its rulers are too sinful to condemn, and on the other, much which it would be impossible to prevent by the laws and penalties by which they might attempt to do so.

Q. 39.—Is not all crime to be accounted sin?

A. 39.—No. Crime includes in the first place acts likely to be of considerable and continual inconvenience and injury to the public if freely permitted; secondly, it includes acts of rebellion against the government itself. It would be a sin to do a particular deed whenever it was liable to inflict injury upon another where he had a right to expect safety therefrom, and it might be constituted a crime to do it; but under given circumstances the same deed might cause injury or damage to nobody, in which case it would no longer be a sin, though it might remain a crime. It has even happened in history that a government, wise in its generation, has condemned as a crime that which the world has subsequently learned to be not injurious and therefore not sinful at all.

Q. 40.—What is the test for sin in respect of conduct?

A. 40.—The test of sin in respect of conduct is the question: does it make for life or for death? Will it save life and increase it, or will it diminish life and destroy it, whether directly, for

example, by damaging the body, or indirectly, for example, by damaging the existing sources of food, or by spoiling the opportunity for getting it in sufficient quantity and kind? As it is right and our first duty to increase life or to keep alive, so it is wrong and it is sin to damage life or to kill.

Q. 41.—Does the divine law, "Thou shalt not kill," refer to our own life only or to the life of our fellow-men as well?

A. 41.—The divine law, "Thou shalt not kill," refers to the life of our fellow-men as well as to our own. For in general the will of God concerning one man is the same as his will concerning another, and we would appear to be opposing the will of God in killing another whose duty it was to continue to live. Moreover, we gather the truth of the same doctrine from the fact that all of us are intensely dependent in an infinite number of respects upon our fellow-men for the measure of life which we enjoy, and not merely upon these who are with us still, but upon those of generations past: that fact suggests that it is the will of God that the human race should be mutually sustaining; besides, if to destroy sustenance or to spoil the opportunity of getting it abundantly is forbidden, it must be that we are forbidden to kill those who help our opportunity.

Q. 42.—Is it sinful to kill the lower animals?

A. 42.—All killing of the lower animals is not sinful. The wanton destruction of them would seem to be sinful as contrary to the will of God that they should live, since they appear to have received the commandment to live in common with ourselves But we have not in their case, as in that of our fellow-men, a sense of indebtedness as a ground for considering them inviolate. The fact of being peculiarly indebted to some of them, as to sharers in our labour or companions in our leisure, at once alters our sentiment in their case. On the other hand, the human race has been vastly dependent upon the lower animals as affording sustenance when killed, just as a great many species of the lower animals, whilst abstaining from mutual destruction, have depended upon other species.

Q. 43.—Is all damage and killing of fellow-men sinful?

A. 43.—As the world stands at present, all damage and killing of fellow-men is not sinful. That is not on the ground that some tribes are lower than our own. For, although it may have been partly on the ground that they are lower, that we found our permission to take the lives of the lower animals in order that we might have the more life ourselves, the lowest of the human species are vastly higher than the highest of the rest of animated species in various respects, and, above all in this, that they appear to have reasoning faculties capable of education; in other words, they appear to possess spiritual life as well as animal, which is not manifestly true of any of the rest. The justification for damage and killing of human beings in special circumstances is to be found in remedial purposes. As it is better to lose a diseased limb by amputation than to lose the whole body by transmission of the disease from the part to the whole, so it may be better to exclude a diseased person from the society of others, greatly to his private damage, than to allow the rest to become diseased by contagion with him. In like manner it may be reasonable, and not sinful, in some cases, to shut off in prison, or even to cut off from the land of the living those whose conduct is deadly or at least seriously injurious to their neighbours. According to the view that the tendency to bad conduct is a disease, such a measure of dealing with it is specially justified as being preventive of contagion. And self-defence, even to the extent of taking the life of an assailant, if that be necessary, is as surely permissible. The deed of the one who does so in obedience to the instinct and command to cherish his own life is not a sin equivalent to that of the other if his motive was malice prepense or a desire for greedy gain: it is just therefore in accordance with ancient Hebrew opinion that "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood

be shed," and we also read that Jesus said—

"All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. xxvi. 52).

Q. 44.—Is it sinful to go to war?

A. 44.—As the world stands at present, all warfare is not sinful. Predatory warfare is as sinful as robbery with murder, being the same thing on a vast scale. Defensive warfare is no more sinful than self-defence of any other kind, being nothing more than the self-defence of a larger number in co-operation against a larger danger. Neither of these kinds of warfare has killing for its end; indeed killing is rather its accident than its means: the object of both these kinds of warfare is to enforce submission. The conduct of a soldier or a commander who slaughters or causes slaughter as an end in itself is not merely wrong, but inexpressibly sinful. Warfare called punitive, if properly so called in a given instance, is sinful, because it is lawless and therefore inhuman and unjust. A belligerent in the cause of defence may sometimes discover a true need for temporary or limited aggression, and at the point of declaration of war may have found that to take the initiative was justified in view of the manifest, though unconfessed, intentions of an enemy.

REPORTS.

Will correspondents kindly send communications relative to the Magazine to Mr. Eustace Gordon, 35 Rosemary Street, Belfast, during the next three months.

* *

Larne.—U.V.F. Patriotic Fund—On Tuesday afternoon, the 15th August, a fete was held in the school-room and grounds of the Larne and Kilwaughter Old Presbyterian Church, in aid of the funds of the Ulster Volunteer Patriotic Fund. The opening ceremony, which was performed by Mrs. John Campbell, of Castle Upton, and over which the Rev. James Kennedy presided, was well attended by the general public.

In the course of his remarks, the Chairman said they were met there that day in order to do something to help the Patriotic Fund—to help the sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, of those who had fought and bled for life and liberty and peace and freedom in these isles. No nobler object could be set before them than to help those who had helped them, and perhaps saved them. He had great pleasure in asking Mrs. Campbell to declare the fete open.

Mrs. Campbell, who was warmly received, said — Mr. Chairman and friends—It needs no words from me to commend to an assembly such as I see before me the object of this gathering to-day. I understand the entire proceeds will be devoted to the U.V.F. Patriotic Fund. An appeal could not be made on behalf of a nobler cause. The 1st of July proved the gallantry and efficiency of our Ulster soliders, and also brought home to us the sufferings and sorrows incident to war. The heavy casualty lists proclaim the urgent need of all the help the Fund requires. You will agree with me that as much as possible should be done for the widows and children of men who have voluntarily given their lives for their country, and that those men who have been permanently injured should not suffer privations in consequence of their patriotic action. Grants will be made from this Fund to the dependents of the men who have fallen, and to those men who may be disabled so that they cannot earn their living as formerly. These men have done their duty. Let us do ours. Let us emulate those heroes who sacrificed their lives that the British ideal of liberty should be maintained and preserved—those heroes on land and sea and air—not only Ulster men, but Munster men, and all British men and boys who sleep beneath the waves, on the plains of Flanders, on the rugged slopes of Gallipoli, on the banks of the Tigris, away far out on the African veldt, and in the valley of the Somme. Let us remember those men and boys to-day, and open our pockets, as well as our hearts. I have much pleasure in declaring the Sale open..

In addition to the usual flower, pro-

vision, work, and refreshment stalls there were numerous side shows of novel attractions throughout the grounds of the church. An orchestra, under the leadership of Mr. James Lappin, discoursed an enjoyable selection of music. In the church during the course of the afternoon there were several organ recitals, at which Mr. Edward Holmes presided. Mrs. W. J. Wilson, Miss Mollie Austin, and Rev. Mr. Watkins rendered solos.

* *

(*A number of Reports unavoidably held over.*)

DEATHS.

MILLAR—At Innishargie, near Ballyhemlin, Co. Down, on Saturday, 19th August, 1916, Susanna, the wife of Robert Millar, aged 82 years. Interred in the family burying-ground at Ballyhalbert, Monday, August 21st.

WHITE—Killed in action on July 1, 1916, Private John White, R.I.R. (Holywood Volunteers), dearly-beloved son of Margaret White, 16 Sullivan Street, Holywood, aged 24 years.

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